

7A Am. Jur. 2d Automobiles § 405

American Jurisprudence, Second Edition | November 2021 Update

Automobiles and Highway Traffic

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V. Traffic Regulations; Offenses Regarding Vehicles, Driving, Licensing, and Registration

M. Other Offenses

§ 405. Use of turn signals

[Topic Summary](#) | [Correlation Table](#) | [References](#)

West's Key Number Digest

West's Key Number Digest, [Automobiles](#)  327 to 329

Some statutes may require the use of directional signals on all occasions when a turn is made, such as a change of direction or changing lanes;¹ the purpose of the requirement is to alert other drivers to an intended movement.² The requirement to use a turn signal may be triggered when any other vehicle might be affected by the movement of the turning vehicle.³ Although drivers are not required to signal every time they change lanes, they must signal whenever they perform a movement that could reasonably be considered a part of the other driver's decision-making calculus.⁴ The traffic maneuver need not actually affect other traffic, and it is enough that the move may influence the factors a driver would consider in order to drive safely.⁵ Thus, the requirement that a turning vehicle make a signal applies when other vehicles may be affected by a turn, even when no accident is likely to occur as the result of the driver's failure to give a proper signal.⁶ The failure to signal is a violation of traffic law.⁷

Observation:

A police officer's vehicle can constitute "other traffic" under a traffic statute prohibiting a driver from turning without giving an appropriate signal in the event any other traffic may be affected by the movement.⁸

Some statutes require a vehicle to give a signal continuously for at least 100 feet before turning,⁹ and the term “before turning” means before a vehicle makes a turn onto another roadway, not before a person changes lanes.¹⁰ One motor vehicle statute, governing turning movements and required signals, requires that a vehicle signal for at least five continuous seconds (1) when traveling on a controlled-access highway and (2) when turning from a parked position (regardless of the type of roadway on which the vehicle is parked), and in all other circumstances, a vehicle must signal for at least the last 100 feet traveled before turning.¹¹ Other statutes create a duty to signal a turn not less than 200 feet before turning, and apply regardless of whether a stoplight or other traffic signal requires a complete stop before turning.¹²

A turn signal is not, under some statutes, required when entering a freeway from an on-ramp.¹³ Traffic regulations governing the use of turn signals do not apply to roundabouts.¹⁴ However, signaling is required in circumstances where there exists signage or other indicator that one lane is ending and the other surviving.¹⁵ Some statutes governing turn signals require that drivers signal turns whenever they intend to turn or change lanes, regardless of the situation or type of roadway.¹⁶

A regulation requiring the display of a signal for turning into a private parking lot does not require the use of a signal when exiting the lot.¹⁷

CUMULATIVE SUPPLEMENT

Cases:

Police officer's mistake of law in initiating stop of defendant's vehicle allegedly based on claimed traffic violation of failing to signal for 100 feet before changing lanes was reasonable, and thus officer had reasonable suspicion for stop, although statute governing turning movements and required signals did not plainly contemplate failure to signal for 100 feet before changing lanes; Colorado Department of Motor Vehicle driver's handbook supported officer's interpretation of law. [U.S. Const. Amend. 4](#); [Colo. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 42-4-903](#). [United States v. Rubio-Sepulveda](#), 237 F. Supp. 3d 1116 (D. Colo. 2017).

[END OF SUPPLEMENT]

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Footnotes

- 1 [People v. Rice](#), 44 A.D.3d 247, 841 N.Y.S.2d 72 (1st Dep't 2007).
- 2 [Coleman v. State](#), 188 S.W.3d 708 (Tex. App. Tyler 2005), petition for discretionary review refused, (Apr. 5, 2006) (light must blink prior to lane change).
- 3 [State v. Salcido](#), 238 Ariz. 461, 362 P.3d 508 (Ct. App. Div. 2 2015), review denied, (Apr. 11, 2016); [State v. Riley](#), 638 So. 2d 507 (Fla. 1994); [State v. Malloy](#), 453 N.W.2d 243 (Iowa Ct. App. 1990).
- 4 [State v. Salcido](#), 238 Ariz. 461, 362 P.3d 508 (Ct. App. Div. 2 2015), review denied, (Apr. 11, 2016).
- 5 [State v. Salcido](#), 238 Ariz. 461, 362 P.3d 508 (Ct. App. Div. 2 2015), review denied, (Apr. 11, 2016).
- 6 [Woods v. State](#), 175 So. 3d 579 (Miss. Ct. App. 2015).
- 7 [Tripp v. State ex rel. Department of Public Safety](#), 2005 OK CIV APP 47, 117 P.3d 266 (Div. 3 2005).
- 8 [State v. Salcido](#), 238 Ariz. 461, 362 P.3d 508 (Ct. App. Div. 2 2015), review denied, (Apr. 11, 2016).
- 9 [Com. v. Slattery](#), 2016 PA Super 99, 139 A.3d 221 (2016).
- 10 [Com. v. Slattery](#), 2016 PA Super 99, 139 A.3d 221 (2016); [State v. Fletcher](#), 187 Vt. 632, 2010 VT 27, 996 A.2d 213 (2010).
- 11 [State v. Brooks](#), 157 Idaho 890, 341 P.3d 1259 (Ct. App. 2014).

- 12 *Peak v. State*, 26 N.E.3d 1010 (Ind. Ct. App. 2015).
13 *U.S. v. Powell*, 929 F.2d 1190 (7th Cir. 1991).
14 *Noble v. State*, 357 P.3d 1201 (Alaska Ct. App. 2015).
15 *State v. Colvin*, 157 Idaho 881, 341 P.3d 598 (Ct. App. 2014).
16 *Peak v. State*, 26 N.E.3d 1010 (Ind. Ct. App. 2015).
17 *People v. Silvers*, 195 Misc. 2d 739, 761 N.Y.S.2d 472 (N.Y. City Ct. 2003).

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